

The Expertise of Career Consultants for Adult Career Development in Korea: Reality and Expectation

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Key words

- Career consultant
- Competence
- Adult career development
- Expertise
- Qualification system

The purpose of this study is to analyze the current situation of career consultants who provide diverse services for adults' career development and to suggest policies to produce and utilize career consultants. While 'career consultant' is not a formalized job-title yet, in this study, we adopt the title to cover various types of workers in this area using diverse titles.

For this purpose, various research methodologies such as literature review, survey, delphi survey through an expert panel composed of 42 members, internet search and interview about systems of advanced countries, etc. were employed.

Career Development Competencies of Korean Adults

In order to draw the expertise required of workers for career development, first of all, we tried to measure the gap between the expected level and the current level in terms of various competences of Korean adults for effective career development. We found as the competences which must be supported for Korean adults; positive attitude toward change, understanding about individuals' current job competence, career transition competence, collecting and utilizing information related to careers, employment skills, etc.

Career Consultants in Korea

We analyzed the current situation of career consultant for adult career development. In analyzing career consultants, we included headhunters, vocational counselor in public employment service(PES) centers, career consultant in private sector, and vocational guidance personnel in private job centers. They were analyzed in terms of job-title, number, and education and training backgrounds.

All together, the number of workers in this field is about eight thousand. The number of vocational guidance personnel in private job centers take up almost two thirds of the entire number. The number of vocational counselor in PES centers is about 1,800. There are about 500~1,000 headhunters in Korea. There are less than 100 career consultants who provide out-placement service and individual career consulting.

Most workers have been focusing mainly on the match between jobs and individuals. They have served specific target groups, such as the highly educated group or the disadvantaged group. There are few consultants who provide individual

counseling and consulting services.

There exists no systemic definition or qualification system about the competence level and expertise of career consultants. Presently, there exists almost no barrier for entering this field. Most workers have been acquiring their expertise once they entered their jobs. Since there has been no systems of formal education and training, it turns out that current consultants are not well equipped in terms of theoretical backgrounds, professional skills and job ethics required for their job performance.

Examples of Expertise of Career Development Support Personnel

By analyzing the examples of countries such as Great Britain, USA, Canada and Japan, where employment patterns have become flexible and the employment support system has been actively working, it is possible to draw the following implications on education and training for career consultants in Korea.

First, while there are various types of workers related to career development support for adults, recently governments have tried to set up a standard for expertise required in terms of contents and levels of competences in order to provide better services for clients. In this effort for standardization, governments have been working based on a strong and broad partnership among the researchers, current workers' association, academic association in this area, etc. The standards of expertise of career development workers have served as a guideline for service activities of current workers and education and training of future workers in this field. Among the standards of the four countries, it was possible to find common elements of expertise of career development support personnels.

Career consultants are defined as persons who help with various aspects of individuals' career development. The delphi panel agreed on the occupational title for these workers- career consultant. The panel also agreed that there is a need to divide career consultants by levels depending on their level of expertise.

Based on the three parts of expertise, we specified knowledge and skills into separate indicators. Depending on the level of skills and knowledge of the each indicator, it is possible to classify the expertise of career consultant into three levels as entry-level, standard, and expert level.

By utilizing this structure of expertise of career consultants, we evaluated the expertise of current career consultants and proposed programs to improve their expertise. In addition, we suggested a programs to train in-house career consultants working in industries.

Strategies for Education and Training and Utilization of Career Consultants

Based on the structures of expertise of career consultants, we suggested the following policies and strategies for training and utilization of career consultants.

- Programs to train educational staffs for career consultants must be developed very urgently in order to provide education and training for current and future

career consultants. For effective training, this program should adopt practical education methodologies such as case studies and role-playing in addition to traditional lecture-type methodologies.

- In order to provide good quality service to adults, a qualification system for career consultants should be developed. The structure of expertise developed in this study may provide the guideline for the qualification system.
- Based on the expertise structure, it is necessary to review current rules and regulations about career development support personnels and to revise regulations to strengthen the expertise of these personnels.